



The Honorable
Christopher A. Hart
Acting Chairman

NTSB 101

- Independent federal agency that investigates transportation accidents and incidents, all modes
 - Aviation
 - Highway
 - Rail
 - Marine (NTSB or Coast Guard)
 - Pipeline
- Determine probable cause(s) and make recommendations to prevent recurrences
 - Do not determine blame or liability



Other NTSB Activities

- Conduct special studies and investigations
 - Review troubling trends
 - Make recommendations to address trends
- Assist victims and their families
 - Extensive assistance, first few days
 - Longer term, further assistance upon request



Purpose

- Single focus is *SAFETY*
- Primary product:
Safety recommendations
- Not a regulator, can only recommend
- Recommendation recipients are not required to implement recommendations



Recommendations

- Safety recommendations are issued to any organization that has authority to address the problem, including operators, manufacturers, regulators (U.S. and foreign), labor unions, trade associations, and state and local governments
- Response to recommendations:
 - > 80% favorable



Independent

- 5 Members
 - Nominated by President, confirmed by Senate
- Political independence
 - Political party balance
 - Member terms are fixed and staggered
 - Requirement for relevant background, expertise
 - Objective: Conclusions from facts, not politics
- Functional Independence
 - Not a regulator or operator
 - Objective: Impartial and unbiased investigations



NTSB On-Scene

- NTSB usually in charge of investigation
 - Coast Guard often in charge re maritime mishaps
- Exception: Criminal activity
 - NTSB requests FBI to take over
 - NTSB provides support, as requested
 - Facts no longer freely disclosed



Role of On-Scene Member

- Primary Member role is media liaison
 - May also be political liaison
- Facts are very sensitive, important to have NTSB as the only source
 - Unbiased
 - In context of the big picture
- Important to avoid speculation
- Preparation of Member includes history of similar accidents, recommendations



Keeping the Public Informed

- Objective: *TRANSPARENCY* of the facts and the process
 - Factual information is placed in the public docket (except proprietary information, as appropriate)
 - Sunshine Act requires Board deliberations to occur in public
 - Final NTSB accident report is also in the public docket

BUT...

- Final NTSB accident report is *not admissible in court*



After On-Scene

- On-Scene Member no longer serves as media liaison
- Facts placed in public docket
- Media liaison is through Public Affairs
 - PA may choose to include Chairman



“Final” Member Involvement

- Staff presents proposed report, findings, probable cause, and recommendations to Board in Sunshine Meeting
- For additional transparency, Board deliberates in public to enable public to know basis of decisions
- Board decides by majority vote, Members can file concurring or dissenting opinions
- May be different process re investigations led by Coast Guard or decisions delegated to staff



Thank You

Questions?



National Transportation Safety Board